

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9409

INFO AMMBASSY BELGRADE 2808

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CINCEUR

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1540

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS ON SALT, DETENTE

1. SUMMARY. THE SOVIET PRESS OVER THE WEEKEND JANUARY 30-FEBRUARY 2 STRONGLY REAFFIRMED SOVIET INTEREST IN REACHING
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A SALT AGREEMENT. AT THE SAME TIME IT CONTINUED ITS CAMPAIGN

AGAINST THE "ENEMIES OF DETENTE," AND IN SOME INSTANCES, IMPLIED COLLUSION WITH THEM BY THE ADMINISTRATION; BUT AS COUNTERPOINT IT EMPHASIZED BROAD POPULAR SUPPORT IN THE U.S. FOR A RELAXATION OF TENSION WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AND CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION WITHIN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AIMED AT THIS GOAL. ONE BYPLAY IN SUCH COMMENTARY WAS AN EFFORT TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF SUCH ISSUES AS ANGOLA ON THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, WHICH, THE PRESS SEEMED TO CONTEND, OUGHT TO BE AND IS BASICALLY IMMUNE TO SUCH PRESSURES--ESPECIALLY IN THE OVERWHELMINGLY IMPORTANT AREA OF SALT. THE APPARENTLY CLEARCUT STATEMENT THAT SALT IS DIVISIBLE FROM OTHER ISSUES SEEMS TO BE A CHANGE FROM THE RELATIVELY UNSURE SOVIET POSITION OF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. SALT SUPPORT. THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE RECENT STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR SALT WAS CONTAINED IN AN UNSIGNED EDITORIAL ON THE FRONT PAGE OF IZVESTIYA JANUARY 31. THE EDITORIAL TAKES NOTE OF THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA TALKS, PRAISES THE "CONSTRUCTIVE RESULTS" OBTAINED DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS IN MOSCOW JANUARY 20-23, AND STATES FLATLY THAT "WE WANT THE AGREEMENT TO BE WORKED OUT AND THEN SIGNED--THE SOONER THE BETTER." PRAVDA'S WEEKLY INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FEBRUARY 1 REPEATS THE COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE FROM THE JANUARY 20-23 TALKS, AND PARAPHRASES FROM THE MURREY MARDER ARTICLE IN WASHINGTON POST EXCERPTS WHICH SAY THAT THE PRESIDENT IS SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE TALKS; THAT THE SOVIETS PRESENTED "IMPORTANT NEW IDEAS;" AND THAT THE SECRETARY MAY BE RETURNING TO MOSCOW "IN THE NOT DISTANT FUTURE" TO CONTINUE THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS.

3. DETENTE WORRIES. THE PRESS AT THE SAME TIME CONTINUES A STREAM OF FAIRLY FIERCE CRITICISM AGAINST "OPPONENTS OF DETENTE" IN THE U.S. IZVESTIYA'S MONTHLY INTERNATIONAL REVIEW JANUARY 30 ACCUSES THE WEST IN GENERAL, AND THE U.S. IN PARTICULAR, OF ATTEMPTING TO DEFLECT ATTENTION FROM ITS OWN INTERNAL ILLS BY

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BLAMING SUCH ILLS ON DETENTE. PRAVDA ON FEBRUARY 2 CARRIES A SIGNED COMMENTARY CRITICIZING IN STIFF TERMS THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET MESSAGE TO CONGRESS FOR PROVIDING FOR A "SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN U.S. MILITARY MIGHT" AND A REAL INCREASE IN PENTAGON SPENDING. PRAVDA'S WEEKLY REVIEW FEBRUARY 1 CHASTIZES GENERAL BROWN FOR RESURRECTING THE SOVIET MILITARY AS THE MAIN THREAT TO U.S. SECURITY IN HIS TESTIMONY BEFORE

THE HOUSE.

4. DETENTE--THE WAVE OF HISTORY. IN A STRONG AND EQUALLY EMPHASIZED COUNTERPOINT TO THESE ATTACKS ON "DETENTE OPPONENTS", HOWEVER, THE PRESS ARGUES THAT POPULAR SUPPORT FOR DETENTE AND REALISM IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES INSURES THAT DETENTE WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE DOMINANT CHARACTERISTIC IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS--DESPITE SETBACKS ON SUCH ITEMS ON ANGOLA. PRAVDA'S WEEKLY REVIEW FEB 1 AGAIN CLAIMS THAT THE "OVER-WHELMING MAJORITY" OF AMERICANS SUPPORT DETENTE, AND THAT "SOBERLY THINKING OFFICIALS (IN THE U.S.) CONTINUE TO WORK TO SPREAD DETENTE TO BROAD AREAS" OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP; AMONG THOSE OFFICIALS, THE PAPER CONTINUES, IS SECRETARY SIMON, WHOSE TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE IS ONE INDICATION THAT "IDEAS OF IMPROVING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, STRENGTHENING MUTUAL TRUST...NOTWITHSTANDING ALL EFFORTS TO DISTURB THEM, ARE BEING SPREAD EVER MORE WIDELY IN ALL SPHERES OF AMERICAN LIFE". IZVESTIYA'S MONTHLY REVIEW JAN 30, AND PRAVDA COMMENTATOR KUDRYUMOV, WRITING FEB 2, BOTH RELY ON THE RECENT LOU HARRIS POLL SHOWING 62 PERCENT OF U.S. CITIZENS FAVOR A CONTINUED SEARCH FOR AGREEMENT WITH THE USSR AS FURTHER UNIMPEACHABLE EVIDENCE THAT DETENTE'S SUPPORT BASE IN THE U.S. REMAINS FIRM. KUDRYUMOV CONTENDS THAT THE U.S. REACTION TO THE SECRETARY'S RECENT TALKS WITH BREZHNEV SHOWS THAT "RESPONSIBLE CIRCLES" CONTINUE TO REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF MILITARY DETENTE, AND QUOTES THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT THAT SALT IS NOT A FAVOR THE U.S. IS DOING FOR THE USSR. KUDRYUMOV CRITICIZES COMMENTATORS IN THE U.S. WHO ATTEMPT TO USE SUCH QUESTIONS AS ANGOLA AND ALLEGED SOVIET SALT VIO-

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LATIONS TO INSTILL IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AN ANTI-DETENTE ATTITUDE WHICH IS NOT IN KEEPING WITH ITS TRUE ATTITUDE. KUDRYUMOV ALSO ADDS THAT CONGRESSIONAL REFUSAL TO FUND U.S. INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA SHOWS THAT THE DOMINANT U.S. ATTITUDE, WHICH, HE SAYS, CONGRESS CANNOT IGNORE, ESPECIALLY IN THIS YEAR OF ELECTIONS, IS ONE SUPPORTING "REALISTIC POSITIONS". END UNCLASSIFIED.

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5. COMMENT. THE CLEAR THRUST OF THIS COMMENTARY IS THAT MOSCOW BELIEVES THAT THE REALITIES OF PRESENT INTERNATIONAL LIFE, TOGETHER WITH U.S. DOMESTIC POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS, LEAVE THE U.S. NO CHOICE BUT TO CONTINUE A POLICY AIMED AT RELAXING TENSIONS WITH

THE SOVIET UNION. SUCH ISSUES AS ANGOLA CLEARLY NOT
ONLY SHOULD NOT, BUT WILL NOT, DISTURB THIS MAIN
STREAM OF PROGRESS, THE PRESS SEEMS TO REASON.
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